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AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE A

CHRISTIAN ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION.

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ADDRESS.

It was at Marburg, Oct. 4th, 1529, at the close of the memorable conference between Luther and Zwingle, that Protestantism proclaimed to the world the beautiful and charitable doctrine, "that there is Unity in Diversity."

I trust our meeting to-day may aid in re-affirming this Protestant article of faith, and that, like Luther and Zwingle, and their confederates, we can at least, "let the Christian world know" that we are agreed in the weightier matters of the law, although some diversity on matters of faith may still exist. Such a manifesto will cheer the heart of many an honest friend of our cause; aid in giving unity and strength to our witnessing profession, and at least weaken that feeling of alienation and want of sympathy in a common cause, which our separate Church-state necessarily genders; although it may produce as bitter regrets among the adherents of that *Anti-Christ*, against whom our unity strikes, as did the declaration of the Reformers, among the friends of that *Anti-Christ*, the man of sin, whom their unity opposed, and whose adherents quailed with fear, and raved with anger, because the conference had produced such unity instead of open disruption.

Ours is a conference of no small moment, when we consider the weighty matters involved in the objects of our assembling; and however much we may resemble the conference at Marburg in the paucity of our numbers and *apparent* weakness of our cause; and however little we may resemble that conference in the learning and talents of its Doctors; yet the cause of Christ is involved here as it was there, and we can cast our bread upon the waters assured we will find it after many days, for the crown and covenant of our blessed Redeemer cannot be broken and trodden under feet of men forever.

We assemble as a *Christian* Convention: but not to unchurch beyond the pale of Christianity all who are not with us. We assemble as an *Anti-Slavery* Convention; but not to anathematize to eternal destruction every slaveholder, and so place him without the kingdom of God, as being emphatically without God and without hope in the world. No, no; we judge no man in this respect; nor seek to wrest the sceptre from the hand of Jesus our Eternal King, because he has given us a place in his kingdom. In so far as we may appear *exclusive* in dealing with this question of Slavery, it is an exclusiveness that does not judge men's *hearts*, but their *character*. It is with men's character, as *developed* by their *faith* and *conduct*, we have to do; and the commission given to the Church to bind or loose on earth, rests on this great truth of the Divine word, that we are to judge men by their fruits, and separate from even every *brother* that walketh disorderly. A man's heart may be as deeply steeped in sin as was the heart of Judas Iscariot, but so long as he does not develop it by evidence in a tangible form, he is entitled from man to all the privileges of the Christian Church. A man's heart may be as tender and zealously affected towards Christ and his cause, as was the Apostle Peter's, yet when he sins by even *dissembling* of the truth, he is not only to be blamed, but

withstood openly, as Peter was by Paul. We are not then acting uncharitably, when testifying against slaveholding as a sin of great magnitude—and against slaveholders as unworthy the fellowship of the Church of Christ. Nay, we believe that our judgment has in it all the elements of truth and charity. Indeed Slavery, in our land, stands forth in such glaring deformity, and carries in it, as a part of itself, all the elements of oppression and cruelty to man, *as a man*, that its sinfulness may be regarded as almost, if not altogether, self-evident to all who look upon it, and who have eyes to see; or who hear of it, and have ears to hear; unless they be blinded in their mind and hardened in their hearts, by long participation in it—by avarice, that covets everything from the abyss of hell to the throne of God,—or by party zeal, that looks with the eyes of an ox, upon the sovereignty of God above, and the sufferings of man beneath his feet, when the advancement of party interests are not involved; or unless they be callous and indifferent to the interests of man, and live like the earth-worm, feeding on dirt, satisfied with that, that satisfies the depraved appetite of their fallen nature. But in lifting up our testimony for God, we should endeavor to demonstrate that testimony, and make it plain to the perception, and if the subject allow, to the comprehension also, of the weakest lamb in the fold. If Slavery be not sinful, then may we be found haply fighting against God; and as some dare deny its sinfulness, this point must claim our attention as a foundation article in our testimony. Indeed the whole superstructure rests on the hypothesis, that slaveholding is a sin against God. Bear with us then whilst we briefly examine its nature; for if we understand not the character of the wrong, how can we apply the remedy? And here we may not view it in individual or isolated cases, in which the highest degrees of cruelty and wrong may be made bare to the gaze of Christian sympathy, in order to excite the feelings and passions of the human mind against it in its grossest forms, but we will hastily consider the *system*, and that too in its mildest aspect, that our minds may be prepared to act against it intelligently, and without any of the danger of reaction so often flowing from misguided feelings and passions.

As a *system* it contains, as an essential element, the fearful dogma, that the slaveholder has control of both body and soul of the slave—that he is *property*; not that there is property *in* the *man*, but that the *man himself is property*. The natural right that God has given every man to the government of his life, and to pursue happiness in the way of his own choice, is absolutely taken away from the slave, and given by a legal enactment into the hand of the slaveholder; and hence he has the same kind of vested right in his slave as in his other property; and consequently must have the same right of control. The fact that the law professedly protects the life and limb of the slave from wanton injury, does not invalidate our statement, but, on the contrary, like the law protecting the beast of the field against *cruel* treatment, it evidences his right of control in all cases not thus excepted. It does not give him the right of control, except in cases violating the *conscience* of the slave, or destructive of *parental authority*, or that may not consist with the *law of his God*. No, no, the control of the master is so absolute over his slave as his chattel and goods *personal*—as his *property* in both *soul and body*, constituting him a *man*—that no *conscience*, no *parental authority*, no *law of his God*, are known to the *law of Slavery*! It is a fatal mistake to suppose that slave-

holding consists simply in the *right of labor* held in the slave. Were this all the right given to the master, slavery must soon end, as no such right could descend from parent to child; but the right of *property*, secures to the possessor the *increase* of that property. Hence if *man in the character of property*, be not man's natural position under the Divine law, that system that so places him, and so uses him, must be in its very elements essentially a violation of the moral law, and consequently sin against God. The punishment of the criminal even, has in it nothing of slavery as defined by our laws. He may have *forfeited* his liberty, and be deprived of the protection of the State to the enjoyment of that liberty that he has abused, yet the State claims him not *as property*, nor entails on him and his the *law of property*. Indeed, in this respect, Slavery stands out solitary and alone, unable to find in any punishment of criminals, or any governmental oppression, such an assumption of Divine prerogatives as it claims for itself, when it converts a MAN, both soul and body, into *property*, and entails on him the law of property! Here let us say to the Church: "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee, (God) which frameth mischief by a law?"—Ps. 94: 20.

Again: Slavery, *as a system, destroys the family*. There is no such thing as *family* known to the law of Slavery. In its very nature, it cannot exist, except for a limited time. And hence it is an *essential* feature in this system, that it destroys the family, both in its obligations and affections. Husbands and wives, parents and children, brother and sister, may be permanently separated at the will of the master! The law of marriage, God's ordinance, by which husband and wife are constituted in law "one flesh," needs no power of courts, nor Legislatures, to relax its power in those cases specified by the great Lawgiver; but its potency dwindles into insignificance before the puissant *will* of the lordly slaveholder! So absolutely is he constituted lord of the conscience in these cases, and his *will* substituted for the *Divine will*, in the law of marriage; that it has been a grave question before some Church courts in the South, whether the *law of marriage* was binding on a slave: and whether adultery could be chargeable upon them, for a second marriage during the lifetime of a former partner! That some slaveholders are averse to the wholesale separation of families, we gladly admit; but their forbearance under a sense of duty, a sympathy, is only a *suspension*, not an *abrogation* of the law. All we would ask for the speedy overthrow of Slavery, where emancipation could not be obtained, would be a *law enacted and enforced* against the separation or breaking up of family relations among the slaves. How soon would it make the whole system an intolerable burden. How soon would it destroy the inter-State slave-trade, and indeed all traffic in slaves and souls of men! How soon would it be *seen* that it cut up by the root the very *law* of Slavery, that declared man to be *property*? A master could not then sell the refractory, nor could he mortgage the husband or wife, the parent or child, nor thus divide them by inheritance among his children; but whatever of these acts he would perform, he must do to them in their capacity of a *family*. And who would appear in market to buy them by *families*? What child would desire the inheritance by *families*? Or what parent would curse his child with *families* of slaves, whilst justice to other children prevented the gift of real estate for their support? Let every husbandman conceive, if he can, the intolerable burden that law would impose upon him, that would forbid the *separation* of his flocks,

unless in such cases as included all of a *family* (if we may use the term by comparison), and he will see the working of a law forbidding the separation of family ties among the slaves. It might leave Governmental oppression like that of Egypt over Israel; but *Slavery*, as now established by law, must die. How farcical then the position of those Churches and individuals who, admitting that many wrongs are committed by slaveholders, would yet retain them in Church communion, on the alleged ground of Christian treatment and no separation of families! Yes, and that too whilst pronouncing slaveholding no bar to Christian communion! Is that *Christian* treatment to bring a family under such circumstances as may at any moment rend their ties asunder, and so separate them that they meet not again until they meet together before the judgment seat of Christ? Tell me not that it was no fault of the Christian master, but the sin lies at the door of his cruel creditor, or is taken away by the adverse Providence of God! No, the creditor could exercise no right nor power for the separation of the family, that this so called Christian slaveholder did not claim. You may mortgage your farm, you cannot mortgage mine. And if you did, the officer of the law could do no more than sell *your right*. Your act could not *create* a right that the law did not already recognise. So no man or woman could be sold for their master's debt, and thus separated from each other, if he as a slaveholder did not *hold* them *individually* as his property. Sale of property never destroys its character as property; nor can sale give a *property right* to that which is not recognised in law as property. Hence for a Church to impose the restriction that a family and its obligations be respected, whilst *Slavery* is allowed to continue, is to propose the absurdity, that the *right* to such a thing may be *possessed* without sin, so long as that right is *not exercised*! If this *right* and *power* of separating families was *not held* by the master, no officer of justice, no executor of his will, no administrator could do it for him. The right to hold man as property, then, carries in it the right to disregard the authority of God, and the wisdom and goodness of God in the ordination of the FAMILY, in all its relations, obligations, and affections! The system that gives and seeks to justify such a right, must be *essentially* sinful.

Again: *Slavery, as a system, encourages licentiousness.* The practice of separating husband and wife, must carry with it Polygamy. If it is meet that the power of separation depends on the master's will, it is equally right that the whole law of marriage be controlled by the same will, and hence the common practice among slaves of marrying a second and third time after being separated by this law of force. This must be attended with other forms of licentiousness. A law that does not regard human rights, cannot and will not regard human *virtue*. And why should it? If marriage is regarded as a mere conventional and advantageous arrangement, depending on the slaveholder's will, and this can be called virtue good enough for a slave, other forms of prostitution must be also good. And then the slave-master is rendered secure in the law that makes the slave follow the condition of the mother. Licentiousness with slaves and slaveholders must ever attend this system, that places all female virtue absolutely under the control of one who claims to be proprietor of both soul and body, under the denomination of *his property*, and oftentimes compels the female slave to witness the value at which her virtue is prized, by the number of dollars paid by the highest bidder in the slave market. How vain to plead that the *Christian* slaveholder will do none of these things,

whilst he holds them as his property, subject to all the changes of property, and at death transmits them to his children in the same character. And even with all his hostility to such wrongs, and all his care to protect the virtue of his female slaves, he has no power to guard them against the influence of the system, nor to protect them against the wanton assaults of the licentious. And as "Evil communications corrupt good manners," the whole system tends to produce a spirit of licentiousness among both classes of society, as is lamentably manifest in the complexion of a large number of slaves. This licentiousness is no abuse of the system, but necessarily accompanies it in every community where it exists; and it will be vain to seek a reformation of this wrong, without cutting up slavery by the roots, unless, indeed, it can be successfully maintained that *facilities* for crime have no tendency to increase crime. This licentiousness belonging to slavery, in the prostitution of the law of marriage; in affording no adequate protection to female virtue; in not regarding prostitution among slaves as a criminal offence, and in the prevailing usages of society, as abundantly developed by facts that *cannot lie*, arises from the power given to the master over the slave, by the law of slavery, and is therefore an evil inherent in the system, and consequently goes far to prove that it is *essentially sinful*. And will the Church of God be expected to defend a system that *makes* prostitutes, and spreads licentiousness like a plague over the land, converting a large portion of the South into a great lazaret-house?

But again: Slavery, as a system, has in it the deepest cruelty. We need not here detail the tortured limbs, the lacerated back, the branded hand, the filthy raiment, and the more filthy hovel, nor any other of the many cruelties that may be inflicted on slaves by some cruel masters. No, none of these are necessary for our present purpose. There are no doubt inhuman monsters, who claim ownership of their fellow-men, and whose tender mercies are cruel—and others, naturally mild and gentle, deliver the charge of their slaves to brutal overseers. But all these cases may be regarded as the *accidents* instead of *essentials* of slavery. And it is not only as a system, but in its *mildest form* we wish to examine it. It is after it has undergone the process of the pruning knife of Church and State *Reform*, that we assert that *cruelty* is compounded with its very *essence*. It is cruel to parents; it is cruel to children; even where no separation may occur, the parent must be deprived of parental authority over the child. But that which marks its cruelty most deeply is the base entailing on the child the condition of the parent. Whilst yet unborn, it is marked as the victim of the spoiler's power. No bright spot in future for the slave child! All down through time looks with the bleak and dreary features of the slave plantation. He may possess all the gifts of nature that God bestows on man, but with *property* stamped upon his brow, he is taught to look upon his fate as fixed and sealed, with no oasis in the desert of his hopes opening up before him to give his weary soul a promise of rest, until he find it in the grave. By this law our Saviour would have been *born a slave*, had his mother been among the unhappy victims of its powers. And that which would so much revolt our minds when applied to the blessed Saviour, *should* revolt us when done against any of the members of his body. If it would have been unmitigated wrong and cruelty to have so treated Him, it must be so when we so treat any of his children. His own language is, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it unto ME."

But we need not detail the features and workings of Slavery. It is wholly evil, without one redeeming feature. It neither educates the mind, sanctifies the soul, nor enriches the body. It neither binds in holy love and affection's cords, those who should be dwellers by the same hearth—the family—the family, that God has planted among men, for preservation of all that is good and virtuous and ennobling; nor imparts the comfort of watching by the sick bed of the dying father and mother, ministering to their wants, whilst the blessing of the parting parent falls, like the dew of heaven, on the head of the heart-stricken child. No, no: none of these are the ingredients of Slavery. It tries to crush the family affections of the soul; tear out the sense of parental obligation and filial gratitude; drag man from the throne of God, and stamping *property* on his brow, sends him to herd with the beasts of the field. And can this be baptized by the *Church of God*? Can this be consecrated on the altar of Him, who although rich, for our sakes became poor? of Him that came to “proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God: to comfort all that mourn”? But we anticipate. The Church is excused and Slavery palliated by the peculiar circumstances of the case, and the binding obligation of the Divine law is virtually regarded as superceded by the law of man, and hence many who would not defend Slavery as a *desirable* thing; and some who will admit the intrinsic evil of the system, will yet plead that it may be tolerated by the Church, on the ground that it is the creature of *law*, and the Church should be careful about interfering in matters of State. And they will instance as a fact, that our Saviour and his Apostles did not refuse to fellowship slaveholders under the Roman government, nor give any *express law* by which we could inflict discipline against them under our government. Nay, but on the contrary enjoined obedience to magistracy in the broadest terms.—This is the position of the pro-slavery Churches of our land, who dare not plead that the system as existing, is scriptural and holy. Let us examine this position with some care, as not only is Slavery sustained by it, but the patronage of the General Government in the form of the late fugitive slave law is on this principle either defended or apologized for, and the Church consequently professedly released from the obligation to bear testimony against them. Were either Slavery or the Fugitive Slave Law dependent for their existence and support on a few individuals, every Church would cast them out; but it is plead that because governmental authority is in them, it becomes an *organic* evil that cannot be dealt with by the Church in the way of other sins. In answer to all this, two points must be carefully weighed, in order to make bare the Church's responsibility. To these we crave your special attention.

Our first position is, that all men, in all places, are under law to God, that is, under a law of moral obligations. Every creature, in its physical existence, is under a law to God, suited to its nature, but as a rational and moral being, man is under moral law to God, suited to his rational and moral being. Few will deny this—none, probably, who believe in God as Creator and Preserver. Yet in order that we rightly understand the practical result of this our relationship to God, it is necessary to distinctly understand what is meant by the expression “under law to God.” So little is this law of God in its *practical bearing on us* understood, that we hear professed ministers of the Gospel absolving men from all practical confor-

mity to it as a *rule*, where our own, or the public interests are involved. In other words, granting right of conscience in all acts of religious worship that we owe *immediately* to God, whilst requiring, in our duties and acts owed to men, that individual conscience be merged in the conscience of the many. We *once* thought that the law of God was regarded, by all who admitted its existence, as our rule of conduct both in relation to God and our fellow-men. Our Saviour says of it, that it requires us to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." (Luke 10: 27.) And as this *love* is declared to be the fulfilling of the law; and as we cannot *exhibit* love to God, but by an act obeying him, so we cannot *exhibit* that love that is required in the fulfilling of *this same law* in our relations to one another, but by *acts required by this law*, done in love to one another. Indeed the *sense or feeling* of right or wrong, in our acting towards each other, arises from the pressure and force of this law of God upon us. Since the apostle says he knew sin by that part of God's law that regulates our relation to each other, viz: "Thou shalt not covet," does it not follow that this part or table of God's law is *designed* to affect conscience just as well as that part or table which prescribes our duty immediately to God himself? And if this law is designed to affect our consciences in our several relations to each other, will any presume to say, that it does not require us to *perform* those duties, or *refrain* from those sins, *in act, in deed*, which antecedently the law impressed on conscience as duties or sins? Indeed we are at a loss to conceive how conscience could be affected by the law of God with anything as a duty to our fellow-men, except as a duty to be performed. Hence the law of God is always, under all circumstances, the *rule* of conscience in our relation to men as well as to God; and if so, our conscience must not be merged in what may be termed public conscience. So the Apostle reasons in James 2: 10, 11, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." Indeed our ideas of right and wrong in all relative duties, being derived from the law of God, natural and revealed, proves beyond all controversy that this law must be an universal rule of conduct. And even our sense of the fitness of things, is determined by what we know of the rights and duties prescribed by this law. There is no discoverable fitness or propriety in treating man differently from a brute or not recognizing him as destined for *property* uses, unless we by reason, and the law of God in nature and revelation, could discover that he was created and destined for a higher and better purpose; and this discovery we could not make, unless we also discovered the relationship in which he stood to God, to man, and the brute creation; in other words, discovered the law of God adapted to him in his creation, and thus found him under law to God.

Many have such vague notions of the origin of duty and obligation, that whilst they think *reason* is a sufficient guide in determining the fitness of a certain line of conduct in any mutual intercourse, they do not discover that so far as reason acts correctly as a guide, we are indebted to the law of God, discovered partly by the light of nature, partly by revelation, as we have received it in our conversation with others and by reading and study. Let them remember that in childhood they knew not good from

evil; that without cultivation and exercise the mind would not grow, and then let them inquire how their minds have received sufficient knowledge to reason about *rights and duties*, and they will see the correctness of our position, viz: that they have received their impressions and convictions of right and wrong from the presence of God in nature or in revelation, manifesting his law by his works and by his word, which they have learned by tradition, by observation, by parental instruction, by reading, meditation, &c. &c. Take away all power from man, by any of these means, to discover the law of God, or in other words, the design of God in man's creation, and I repeat, that he could not discover any fitness or propriety in claiming for himself or granting to others a treatment different from that due to a brute. If then by the law of God is the knowledge of sin; if by the law is the knowledge of duty; if by the law is the knowledge of all that wherein man is made to differ morally from the beasts of the field, how unreasonable to receive all our instruction from this law of God as revealed in the book of nature and in the book of revelation (they differ in their fulness) until we know what we are and what are our rights and duties, and then deny its obligation upon us, in maintaining these rights and performing these duties!

Man is therefore under law to God, and Scripture and reason perfectly harmonize in teaching that this law, in its whole obligations, is over us in every divine and human relation, and that by it our conscience is to be enlightened in perceiving and directing the manner of performing all duties to God and man.

But as social rights and duties are not in opposition to the rights and duties of individuals; and as we are individually absolutely under law to God in all relative duties; and as we cannot discover the rights and duties of society in aggregate, except by that law by which we are all in our individual capacity controlled, it follows that society in its organized forms, is also under law to God.

Our second proposition then is: In all organized forms of society God's law is the "Higher Law." This supposes the existence and lawfulness of human laws, but assigns to them the place and name of lower laws, whilst the Divine is the "higher law."

With all the controversy that has lately taken place in our land on this important proposition, there are few, if any, of those who admit that man is under law to God, who will deny the truth of the proposition stated in this general form; yet when we come to specify particulars, there is at once disagreement where but lately all seemed to be harmony. To deny the proposition in its general form would be equivalent to the denial of *all obligation* of a *moral* kind, binding citizens to render obedience to law. Hence, how often do we hear those who deny the truth of the existence of the "Higher Law," appeal to this same "Higher Law" to enforce obedience to human enactments! The argument is not based in *gratitude* to God, for its protection, nor upon the ground of *human right* to require obedience to *human enactments*, but we are all compelled, by oft repetition, to be familiar with such *authority* as the following: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the *Lord's* sake." (1st Pct. 2, 13.) "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power *but of God*: the powers that be are *ordained of God*." (Rom. 13, 1.) We approbate this betaking of ourselves to the "law and to the testimony;"

but then the *very* appeal to God's authority, as the *reason* for this required obedience, places God's law as so far superior to human enactments, that it is not only presented as the "higher law," but so much the "higher law," that it is recognized as the *very reason* for our obedience; and if this is true of its requirements, it is equally true of its prohibitions. It would be strange to say that it is the "higher law" in *requiring* obedience to human laws, and not the "higher law" in its prohibition of what those laws contain adverse to the Divine law. Such a position is so absurd, that we think few reflecting men can be found willing to maintain it. The position that the law of God is not the "higher law" in *prohibiting* as well as *enjoining* obedience to magistratical authority, must rest on the supposition that when God's law enjoins obedience to constituted authority, it is without any limitation—in other words, that the law of God, the "higher law," by virtue of its obligations and authority, places man's laws superior to itself; and whilst these human laws bind us, the law of God expends all its authority in enforcing us to obey, not its own requirements, but the requirements of these human laws. If this position be correct, then are we, in our organized and social relations, under law to God *only so far* as an organized and social authority will allow: for, according to this position, our *first* obligation is to human authority, and *then* to the requirements of the Divine law. Hence it must follow that man has no rule of action save the caprice of the human mind; and our former position, based as it is in nature and revelation, that man is so under law to God that his very knowledge of sin and duty is derived from that law, becomes a "mere rhetorical flourish," and is to be set down with the stale and antiquated notion, that "all men are created free and equal, and endowed with certain inalienable rights," &c. Then, as it is not supposable that constituted authorities among men will always require of us that which is just and right in the eye of God's law, and as it may be maintained—nay, has been maintained—that this law enjoins unlimited obedience to the powers that be, we are called, in maintaining our position that the law of God enjoins obedience in things just and right, and forbids it in things sinful, to examine the word of God, and see how far this obedience to human authority is there enjoined. As the will of God, as creator and governor of the world, is more fully exhibited to us in the Scriptures than in nature, it is right and proper in all such controversies to examine this word, and ascertain "how readeth the law." And even if politicians can regard themselves as under no such necessity, surely every Christian will readily admit that the word of God, and not the carnal theories of mere politicians, is his final appeal, as that by which God will communicate a knowledge of his will as supreme Lawgiver and Judge.

We are then to note this fact: that in laying down the *general rule* of obedience to magistrates, it is done in a general form, without naming *any* exceptions. Thus in Romans 13: 1, 2, "Let every soul be subject to the higher power," &c.; and see also Tit. 3: 1, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work."—1 Pet. 2: 13—17: 2 Pet. 2: 10, 11: Jude ver. 8.—Surely these passages are strong and explicit enough, without burdening us with other quotations, to show obedience to magistracy to an unlimited extent, if such a thing can be found anywhere in the word of God. Bearing in remembrance, then, that these passages enforce obedience to civil

government, and undoubtedly mean that it is ordained or ordered of God for man's good; and hence that our obedience is owed "for the Lord's sake"—"not only for wrath, but for conscience sake"—and that no exceptions of any kind in duties to God or man are named in which it may be lawful to refuse obedience, let us examine the same word and see whether injunctions to obey other authorities, are presented in a similar form. See first obedience to the Church:

Deut. 17: 12—"And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister before the Lord thy God, (or with the judge,) even that man shall die." Again, Matt. 18: 17: "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."—Verse 18th: "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." John 20: 23: "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Again, 1 Cor. 5: 5—"To deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." These passages are enough to show that as absolute power is conferred on the Church as on civil government, and as absolute and unlimited obedience is enjoined in the word of God to the former as the latter. Let us now look at the obedience of children. Col. 3: 20: "Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Here again unlimited obedience is enjoined, and no intimation given that there can be any exceptions. The general duty of obedience on the part of children is well-pleasing to God; but it does not tell us that disobedience could in any case be well-pleasing to him. So of servants of every character. Col. 3: 22: "Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." 1 Pet. 2: 18: "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." Let these references enjoining the same form of obedience in different relations for the present suffice. We have now seen that the magistracy, the Church, parents, and masters, the general *duty* of obedience is enjoined in the same general form, without any limitations or exceptions named in the passages cited; and it must follow, that the same law of interpretation applies alike to all, viz: if God's law enjoins the obedience in all cases, and the subject of this obedience cannot excuse himself upon Divine authority for his disobedience to the requirements of civil law in any case, neither can he for disobedience to the Church, parents or masters. These are all three God's ordinances, ordered for man's good as well as the Divine glory, and if there be any difference in their degrees of importance, both in the order of nature, intrinsically the Church and parents are before magistracy. Suppose then that the magistrate enjoins one line of conduct, the Church another, our parents another, and masters another, whom shall we obey? The same injunction is upon us to render obedience to them all—"Obey in all things." And as no mention, in the passages cited, is made of the subjects *right* under any circumstances to disobey, neither is any provision made, *whom* we shall obey, in case of a disagreement among these constituted authorities.—Shall we then obey them all, although requiring contrary things? or shall we claim to *select* the one we like best, and render obedience to it, and

disobey the others? The law of God says, *obey them all*, and your magistrates cannot claim our obedience by virtue of God's law, unless you obey the Church in all she binds and looses. We in the Church appeal to God's law, as well as you, and now who shall decide between us? Suppose we change the illustration. President Fillmore, Secretary Webster, Clay, Cass, Davis, Foote, Cobb, and others, occupying actually magisterial powers that are supposed to call in question the vitality of "a higher law," stand to us in the three-fold relationship of magistrates, parents and masters, and in each of these they enjoin upon us directly contrary duties, in which of these relations shall we obey? as subjects, as children or servants? And what is supposable of the *same* persons in different relations, is equally applicable to *different* persons in those relations. Let us change again the illustration. Drs. Boardman, Spencer, Adams, Lord, &c., are not only members of a General Assembly in the Church, but in the State. As legislators they assist in framing laws, one of which is a fugitive slave law; immediately afterwards, as members of a court of Christ's house, they are called on to decide by the "law and the testimony" things directly in opposition to parts of this fugitive slave bill, and it may be without any intended reference to this bill; now whom shall we as members of the State and Church obey? Will these men preach obedience to the law of Slavery and to this slave bill to-day, *because we are to obey magistracy*—and to-morrow preach obedience to the decision of the ecclesiastical court, *because we are to obey the Church*? Or what will they do?—Will they disobey God's authority in the Church, by obeying God's authority in magistracy? or will they disobey God's authority in the magistracy, by obeying God's authority in the Church? Surely they will not pretend that they are capable of doing two contrary things in order to render obedience to *their* God in different and *opposing* departments of his authority! It may be they think they can—it surely would be no stranger to hear them as ministers of the Gospel maintain such a position than what they have already published in regard to our obedience to magisterial authority. We live in an age of great light, and great *lights* too. Our reforming fathers that stood before kings for Christ's sake, are lost sight of in contrast with the brighter effulgence of modern ambassadors of Christ, who by the power of their gigantic intellects can discover the law of God, in the glory of our Union, and impiously approbate the feeling that this Union "*was* another ark of the covenant to us," and "the symbol of the Divine presence with us." (Dr. Boardman's Union address.) The whole of this apparent difficulty that seems to exist in applying the law of God to those authorities named, arises from a false notion of the extent of the obedience enjoined. Magisterial, ecclesiastical, parental, and magisterial authority are alike limited by the law of God, and consequently the extent of our obedience is only "in the Lord." If some passages of Scripture give the duty of obedience in general terms, others expressly limit it to things not sinful; thus in the 13th chapter of Romans and 3rd verse it is expressly said that "those rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil," and in the 4th verse, "He is the minister of God to thee for good." In other words, our obedience is to be in the Lord, since they are his ministers, and all their *lawful* authority is from him, we are to obey them in such a way, that we may put honor on God's law. So of the Church, and hence whilst the Church acts right,

she is clothed with Divine power, and ought to be obeyed, but not when she becomes disorderly—2 Thess. 6: 14—2 John 10: 11. So with children's obedience, "Obey in *all* things;" but, Eph. 6: 1, that this obedience is to be within the requirements of the Divine law—"Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Hence the Divine law does not stand to us in that inconsistent way that is claimed for it when it is admitted to be "the higher law," only in enjoining us to obey human authority, but in that consistent and uniform character claimed for it in our proposition, viz: "The higher law" in all organized forms of human society in requiring duty and forbidding sin.

The rule for interpreting its force and applicability to all cases of conscience is clearly laid down by our Saviour—"Render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's and unto God the things that be God's." And hence in perfect consistency with this, these same Apostles by whom the Spirit of God has taught us to obey magistrates—to honor all men—to regard the powers that be, as ordained of God, were by the same Spirit directed to say to these magistrates, "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye," Acts 4: 19. And when these rulers in the exercise of their supposed authority to preserve the public peace and guard it against all fanatical agitators, called these Apostles before them, they thus magistratically addressed them—"Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." "Then Peter and the other Apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5: 28, 29)—Let this language of the Apostles at such a time stand against all the jesuitical cavellings of our modern Divines and political co-adjutors who maintain that God requires us to obey man's law rather than the law of God. But let it not be said that to preach Christ was plainly a duty enjoined by Christ, and, therefore, the Apostles' reply to their rulers is no guide to us in the obedience we owe to existing laws—for their duty to preach Christ was no more plainly revealed, than is ours to "feed the hungry," "clothe the naked," "beware not him that wandereth," "oppress not the hireling," and many similar duties, all of which are to a great extent contravened by existing State and National laws relating to Slavery. Besides, those who present this plea for the Apostles, generally have been left to condemn themselves out of their own mouths; for whilst with one breath they condemn Slavery as a "colossal evil," and say, that "by the grace of God they never will" defend it, the very next breath is expended against those who "have filled Jerusalem with their doctrine," of Bible and legal opposition to Slavery.

But we need not confine ourselves to the apostles nor to the New Testament to find approved examples of opposition to human enactments in order "to render to God the things that be God's." Take the case of the midwives among the Israelites in the time of their bondage in Egypt: when the king saw how the people increased, he became so much alarmed that he directed the midwives to kill the male children as soon as born, but save alive the daughters. "But the midwives feared God and did not as the King of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive."—Ex. 1: 17. Did God approve this act of disobedience to civil authority? Verse 20th, "therefore God dealt well with the midwives"—verse 21st

“and it came to pass, because the midwives feared God that he made them houses.” These midwives of Israel were better politicians for the glory and welfare of a nation, than many of the so called great statesmen of our day, who see the permanency and peace of our nation to lie in the *ribs* of the fetters of the poor slaves—“for that people is a blessed and happy people whose God is the Lord.” Take next the case of the three children cast into the fiery furnace for disobedience to a royal edict. Nebuchednezzar ordered all to fall down and worship the image he had set up, and whilst many through fear, and some probably from a desire to be accounted very patriotic, and to maintain the integrity and peace of his kingdom, obeyed the command. “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchednezzar we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee O king that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”—Dan. 3: 16—18. And God did deliver these men even out of the burning fiery furnace, whilst those who hastened to *execute the law* against them, perished by the flames. “Be wise now, therefore O ye kings; be instructed ye judges of the earth.”—Ps. 2: 10. So it was with Daniel: he would not obey the edict of the king, that there should no supplication be made to any god or man for thirty days, on the pain of death, but “he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”—Dan. 6: 10. He was cast into the den of lions and God spared him to give a public testimony to his integrity in obeying God rather than man; whilst his accusers, were rent asunder “ere ever they came at the bottom of the den.” We need not multiply examples. Many instances in the history of the Israelites are recorded that fully corroborate the meaning of our Lord: Mat. 10: 28, “and fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” And it has been in obedience to this heavenly King, that the saints have in all ages endured persecution refusing conformity to things sinful; until the earth was made drunk with their blood. It has been on this same principle that the children have been delivered by their parents, to the rack, the torture and the stake—refusing with all their tender yearning love to their parents to obey them in opposition to God. It was this same fear of God that made Scotland red with the blood of the Covenanters, and France with the blood of the Huguenots. And we in this land are under God, indebted to those Covenanters and Huguenots for our measure of religious and civil liberty. And it was all transmitted to us in the way of opposing the demands of their governments in things sinful. At one time peace was offered to the Presbyterians of Scotland if their ministers would so far conform to the demands, of the King and Parliament as to wear the surplice Episcopalian dress, when engaged in their public ministry, but they had sworn the covenants and bound themselves by this oath to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar’s and unto God the things that were God’s; and they would not conform, and thus even *seem* to yield the kingly crown of Jesus to an earthly monarch. This offer was made with a view to yield thus much to the demands of the king, who claimed to be the head of the Church in things spiritual and temporal, and although the surplice was but a little thing, it was sternly refus-

ed when it became a badge of conformity to a yielding of the Redeemer's rights in order to propitiate the favor of temporal rulers. Then was drawn out the sword, and these faithful men were hunted by night and day from hill to dale—from the hut to the cave, from the open field to the wood, from the lowlands to the highlands—and slaughtered as they offered up their praise and prayer to God in the congregation assembled in remote fields or woods, or as the family secreted in their cave offered the evening or the morning sacrifice. They looked on their right hand and on their left, but there was none to pity them. Yet Charles with all his power failed to subdue the spirit of these faithful men—God sustained them through the trial—and liberty for the church and for the State was won by their blood, and we this day inherit from them the fulfilment of God's promise to those who fear and obey God—"say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings."—Isa. 3: 10.—Now let it be borne in remembrance and engraven as it were with a diamond upon our memories, that all the great persecutions of the world against Christianity, that filled heaven with martyrs to truth, have been by civil governments—and if God's law requires obedience to these governments without discrimination, then were these martyrs but rebels. There was a time when the Son of God was arraigned partly on the charge of claiming to be a king, and when his judge finding no fault in him, said unto the multitude, behold your king, they with one consent cried out "we have no king but Cæsar." And still when the Son of God appears before us in the person of the poor Slave, as personified by justice and right, the cry goes up from the pulpit and from halls of Legislation, "We have no king but Cæsar," "we have no higher laws than our constitution and the laws of our land." That fickle multitude had but yesterday been crying "Hosanna to the Son of David"—now as they had no king but Cæsar they cry "Away with him, away with him"—and so it will still be—they who set their country above their God, will not prove in the end the best friends of that country;—but like Arnold first in the front ranks doing battle for her to-day—to-morrow, like him, they would sell her for gold. But the lovers of God and his law, having this higher law for their guide, will seek to free their beloved country from her sins, and to bring to her that true glory, and honor, and strength, and permanency, that can only be found in having the Lord for her God.

Such were also the views of our Reformers and of all Protestant divines since the Reformation. The great Calvin gave the gospel trumpet no uncertain sound, when he boldly honored the law of his God as the "Higher Law," and maintained that God was sovereign of all. Let the following extract from Calvin's Institutes be compared with the language of those churches in our day, that are so fearful of slaveholding influence, that they build the house of God with the untempered mortar granted them by the law of Slavery:

"In the obedience which we have shown to be due to the authority of governors, it is always necessary to make one exception, and that is entitled to our first attention,—that it do not seduce us from our obedience to Him, to whose will the desires of all kings ought to be subject, to whose decrees all their commands ought to yield, to whose majesty all their scepters ought to submit. And, indeed, how preposterous it would be for us, with a view to satisfy men, to incur the displeasure of Him on whose ac-

count we yield obedience to men ! The Lord, therefore, is the King of kings ; who, when he hath opened his sacred mouth, is to be heard alone above all, for all, and before all ; in the next place, we are subject to those men who preside over us ; but not otherwise than in Him. If they command anything against Him, it ought not to have the least attention ; nor, in this case, ought we to pay any regard to all that dignity attached to magistrates ; to which no injury is done when it is subjected to the unrivaled and supreme power of God. On this principle Daniel denied that he had committed any crime against the king in disobeying his impious decree (Dan. 6 : 22 ;) because the king had exceeded the limits of his office, and had not only done an injury to men, but, by raising his arm against God, had degraded his own authority. On the other hand, the Israelites are condemned for having been too submissive to the impious edict of their king. For when Jeroboam had made his golden calves, in compliance with his will, they deserted the temple of God, and revolted to new superstitions. Their posterity conformed to the decrees of their idolatrous kings with the same facility. The prophet severely condemns them for having willingly walked after the commandment, (Hosea v : 11.) So far is any praise from being due to the pretext of humility, with which courtly flatterers excuse themselves and deceive the unwary, when they deny that it is lawful for them to refuse compliance with any command of their kings : as if God had resigned his right to mortal men, when he made them rulers of mankind ; or as if earthly power were diminished by being subordinated to its Author, before whom even the principalities of heaven tremble with awe. I know what great and present danger awaits this constancy, for kings cannot bear to be disregarded without the greatest indignation ; and “ the wrath of a king,” says Solomon, “ is as messengers of death.” But since this edict has been proclaimed by that celestial herald, Peter, “ We ought to obey God rather than men ; ”—let us console ourselves with this thought, that we truly perform the obedience which God requires of us, when we suffer anything rather than deviate from piety. And that our hearts may not fail us, Paul stimulates us with another consideration—that “ Christ has redeemed us at the immense price which our redemption cost him, that we may not be submissive to the corrupt desires of men, much less be slaves to their impiety.” (Institutes of religion, B. iv., chap. 20, sec. 32.)

Let us next turn to the late Dr. Jonathan Edwards, and in his sermon on “ submission to rulers,” like Calvin he maintains that our obedience to magistrates is only “ in the Lord,” and the law of God *absolves* us from obedience to sinful commands. We will detain you with but a single extract :

“ Peter says, in his first epistle, ‘ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake ; whether it be to the king as supreme : or unto governors, as unto those that are sent by him.’ It ought to have been translated, ‘ Submit yourselves to every *creature of man*,’ for so it is in the original. So that the apostle here declares all civil rulers, whether supreme or subordinate, to be ‘ creatures of men.’ But if they be the creatures of men, surely men have a right to resist, or even to unmake and annihilate them, if they rule not according to the will of God and the good of the subject.” * * * “ The truth is, and the whole spirit of Scripture confirms it, that rulers are bound to rule in the fear of God, and for the good of the people ; and if they do not, then in resisting them we are doing God service.” (Works, vol. ii. pp. 244-5.)

We could burden you with similar sentiments quoted from the great men of the church since the days of Calvin and Luther, and with many long before their day, but let these suffice. The law of God is then the "higher law," the *rule* for the church, the legislator and the subject.—And whilst it is the duty to yield obedience in all things that do not require a sinful act toward God or man, even though it should be to our own hurt, yet never are we to do wrong to man nor dishonor God, because our law makers may have sinfully forgotten God and acted without his fear upon them when they enacted some of our laws. See how such forsaking of God's law for the law of man, affected Israel. "Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment," (Hosea v: 11.) Not only has God spoken this *law* as man's rule, in his word, but in his providence. He sent his judgments on Pharaoh and his land—heaping judgment on judgment until the death wail wafted on every ear—the pride of Pharaoh and his nation lay low in death—the strength of his army, the support of his kingdom, sank in midst of the angry waves, whilst the shout of praise to God from ransomed millions rose up on the other side in acknowledgment of the deliverance his arm had wrought for them. And after he had used this people for the chastisement of others that feared not God nor obeyed his law, they in turn, for the same sin were broken in pieces. His providence has written this law on the whole history of the world, and he will continue to write it until all nations shall be gathered before him for judgment. The Church too has had this law enstamped on her history by the same overruling Providence, and we are taught by the history of the past, that present prosperity is no evidence that we will escape God's righteous judgments, if we are found dishonoring his gospel or his law.

The application of our argument to the church, as under *law to God*; and the testimony she should display concerning Slavery, is now made easy. Since God has, both by his word and providence, proclaimed the supremacy of his law, and that it never enjoins obedience to that which is in violation of itself, either in relation to God or man, it must be evident that the church of God is most emphatically bound to proclaim the same truths. This will easily appear if we briefly consider the church's character.

1st. She is Christ's ambassador—God's witness. As an ambassador she is to deliver, both by precept and discipline, that, and that only, which Christ has given to her. As a witness she stands, as it were, in Christ's stead, to speak and testify that *for him*, which he has revealed to her. And when God by his law, has discovered to her by piecemeal the wrongs of Slavery, and has written down in his word his judgments against Egypt and his chastisement of Israel, for their oppression, how could the church claim that she was *witnessing for God* when her language is the opposite of his, and she palliates and defends, and embraces, the men against whom the law of God threatens vengeance, unless they break every yoke and let the oppressed go free? As a witness, she is to declare the mind of God, whether sinners will hear or forbear. And hence, as we have shown Slavery to be essentially sinful, and that no human laws can set aside the obligations of the Divine law, but that all, individually and socially, in church and state, are under law to God, and bound to perform all the relative duties enjoined by it, and to refrain from all sin condemned by it, whether human laws affirm or deny, it must therefore evidently follow, that the

church, as a witness for God, cannot fellowship this sin of slaveholding, but must display the banner that he has given her because of the truth.

2. The Divine will is to be the guide of the church. This is an essential characteristic of the church. As she is God's witness "to speak for him, she must speak for him in the manner he prescribes. She is, like every disciple individually, to "take up her cross daily and follow" him. And since the Divine will revealed in his word is wholly at variance with the will and law of Slavery, the church is to speak the will of God and trust him for the consequences, and not to forsake God's plainly revealed will—doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God—for the popular will, because she may seem to gain something by it.

3. The church's character is discoverable in the great end to be effected by her, viz: a renovation of the world. She is called a *light*; a *city* set on a hill; the *salt* of the earth; a soldier; a conqueror, indicating that as an instrument in the hand of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, she is to preserve what is good and destroy what is evil, and thus seek for that renovation which will be perfected in a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. It is not enough that she endeavor to defend herself against the encroachments of the adversary, but she must assail that adversary even in his strong holds. (For this end she is provided with weapons of warfare, that are mighty through God, to the pulling down of these strong-holds.) The greater the power and influence of any evil; the more it is interwoven with the very framework of society, and the less easy the work of overwhelming it may appear, so much the more is it incumbent on the Church, in God's great name to "cry aloud and spare not," and the more incumbent it is upon her, to refuse to have "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Every age brings to the Church some new form of trial to purify her as gold and silver is purified, and try her patience, and her faithfulness to Christ, and it will be well for those who overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

And unquestionably the subject of Slavery in this land is one of the tests that God has, in his providence, proposed to the Church for her trial and purification. Let your eyes run back over the records of God's reckonings with his Church in every age, and you will find in Slavery all the characteristics that are found in those records of the great matters of trial. It is *with us*, *among us*, where our testimony is to be maintained, and not so far off that few will be interested either in its life or death; it is *popular*, the creature of governmental care; it is *powerful*, able to contend for itself, and strike deeply into an adversary; it claims much *goodness* and *usefulness*, even standing in the temple of God, and covering itself with the garb of religion; it *divides* the *professed friends of Christ*, some opposing it, and some defending it; and withal, it is *vindictive*, *cruel*, *unrelenting* and *revengeful* to those who oppose it. If these elements are not found in Slavery, man can have little need of any of the five senses in seeking after truth, for here they must be false; and if these elements are not characteristics of those subjects by which God in his providence has tested the Church's faith, then we have studied the history of the Church to little purpose. Any individual can maintain the character of a *reformer*; and every Church may claim the title of *Reformed*, if all the Church's duty lies in maintaining attainments that are *popular*, and that will produce *no commotion* in the public mind. Such a course would have

left Luther, and Calvin, and Zwingle, and all the Reformers in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church; and the Free Church of Scotland had been yet in the bosom of the establishment; yes, and the blood of the Presbyterians of Scotland, and the Huguenots of France, and Puritans of England, would have continued to flow gently in their veins, instead of becoming, as it has done, the seed of the Church in many lands. The watchword of the Church, should be "*Fight the good fight of faith*,"—"Resist the Devil, and he will flee from thee"—"Keep yourself from idols," and "Say not a confederacy to them that say a confederacy."—How can the Church resist sin? how renovate the world? how proclaim God's testimony, whilst the *sinner*, the *slaveholder*, is folded to her bosom and recognised as guilty of no sin that can be made a bar to Christian communion?

But in opposition to all this, we are told that the example of Christ and his Apostles is against our conclusions; and we are reminded that under the Old Testament dispensation, Slavery, Blood-revenge and Polygamy were tolerated in the Church, and that the "times of this ignorance God winked at." Whatever the form of service among the Jews, *Slavery* it was not. Time will not allow us to examine fully this plea for Slavery, (for if of any force, it not only justifies pro-slavery Churches, but Slavery also,) but this much we would remark: if the servants of the Jews were chattels and goods, recognised by them as *property*, it would be passing strange that when the Chaldeans conquered their nation, and carried them captive to Babyion, that they would not appropriate these slaves to their own use, when they even took away the vessels from the temple.—And yet after seventy years captivity they were returned with the Jews, and some record of their families had been kept during the captivity, as was customary with the Jews. These were the Nethinims, some of whom in Ezra's time were employed in the temple as singing men and singing women. The truth seems to be this: As the Jews could not part with their lands, these servants that dwelt among them were like tenants with us, and the household servants were recognized, as Eliezer with Abraham, as members of the family, and sometimes married into the family. It was a beginning in the fulfilment of the promise, "Japheth shall enlarge his tents and dwell in the tents of Shem." The law relating to man-slayers is fearfully perverted, when introduced as an apology for Slavery or a pro-slavery Church. Never did the world look upon a law so full of mercy to the man-slayer, until he was *proven* guilty; and yet never did it look upon a law so well calculated to prevent bloodshed. There were the cities of refuge—there the index-boards at every cross way, to prevent the possibility of a mistake, whilst of all the relatives of the deceased, and of all officers of the land, God appointed but *one* to be the executioner of justice upon the man slayer. There was mercy. But that one was the first born—he on whom rested the honor of the house—he that was most *likely* to avenge the blood of his relative—he whose *duty* it became to avenge it—and if *by any possibility*, he should witness the deed, and he be able to reach the manslayer before he got within the city of refuge, as the executioner of justice, he would take the life of the manslayer. Can man conceive of any provision by law, that would be so likely as this, to stay the hand of man from the life of his fellow-man?

Polygamy was never sanctioned by the Divine law. And if men so abused these laws of servitude, shedding of blood and marriage that they

were chargeable with sin, and yet God winked at their sins, what is this to the church now? Let pro-slavery men and pro-slavery churches remember that if the apostle says that the "times of this ignorance God winked at," he immediately adds "but now commandeth men *everywhere* to repent." In vain plead such excuses. *God now commands you to repent!* and therefore you disobey his command, when you seek to justify yourselves by any sins of the Jews, even if *tolerated* for a time. But how does the objector know that Christ and the apostles did not instruct the church to separate from the sin of slavery? Is it, because slavery in one of its worst forms existed under the Roman Government, and yet no special instruction was given respecting it? Does the objector then claim that the *Roman Government* was designed by our Saviour and his apostles as a *model* for the Church? Does any *Christian* believe that a slaveholder under the Roman Government, having the power of *life and death* over his slave, was recognised by that Saviour that enjoins as our rule of duty, "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," as a *disciple* and a *fit member* of his church? Why then did he give no *express law* against the slaveholder? As well ask why give no express law against *Polygamy, human sacrifices, Gladiator's shows, Bacchanals and Orgies, Licentious plays, casting men to wild beasts, feeding fish with the bodies of their slaves, &c., &c., &c.* for all these extensively existed under the *Roman Government*. Can any *Christian* be so infatuated as to believe that the apostles did not testify against any sins except those expressly named in their Epistles? Then the sin of sabbath breaking, neglect of family worship, &c., &c., the church ought not to take cognisance of, for they are not *expressly named*. But we have the same kind of a law for excluding slaveholders, that we have for excluding man-slayers, murderers of fathers and mothers, and that too in the same catalogue with these, as you will see in (1st. Timothy 1: 9,10,) "The law is not made for a righteous man, but for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for *men-stealers*, for liars," &c. The word translated men-stealers literally means, "one who makes a man a slave," let him get possession of him as he may.—He that *reduces* another to slavery from freedom (a kidnapper,) or captures in war and sells into slavery, seizes by surprise and sells a free man as a slave, or exercises the trade of a slave-merchant, is an *andrapodistes*, man-stealer, according to the literal rendering of the word and its usage among the Greeks. One who *steals* even a slave to *hold* and *sell* him as a *slave*, is an *andrapodistes*; but no kind of wrong done to man however sinful, can make a man an *andrapodistes*, unless he be guilty of *dealing in men*. This word is equivalent to the law given the Jews, "He that *stealeth* a man, or *selleth* him, or if he be found *in his hand*, shall surely be put to death," that is, the *kidnapper, slave-trader* and *slaveholder*.

Up to the year 1816, I think it was, the General Assembly Presbyterian Church had in their Confession of Faith, under the eighth commandment, a foot note explaining the meaning of this word, *menstealers*; defining and applying it as we have done, and as is done by Poole in his commentary, by Horseley, Bloomfield, &c., &c. There seemed to be no disagreement among the churches up to that eventful period, how slavery should be regarded, and although, with discrimination, slaveholders were received into the communion of most of the churches, there was not a church in

the land that dare *defend* or *apologize* for slavery as not essentially sinful. In admitting slaveholders, they looked forward to emancipation, and enjoined the religious culture, &c., of their slaves, on those thus admitted. Some of our churches finding that their *prudential* measures did not reform slavery of its evils, went forward to an entire separation of it from their churches; others seeing the same evils, have gone *backward* from the *laws of their God* condemning manstealing, to plead the laws of the *land that sanction it*. All we then ask of the churches of every name is simply this: Treat the slaveholder, the man-stealer, as you do the man-slayer, the whoremonger, the idolater and polygamist, since the word of God places them all under its condemnation, and requires the same evidences of professed change of heart, viz: repentance. How would the missionary of the Cross expect to succeed in evangelizing the world, if he must so preach and apply the Gospel of his Saviour as to *tolerate* in members of the church a participation in those idolatrous practices established by law or long sanctioned by usage—such as falling down before Jugernaut or sacrificing the wife on the funeral pile of the husband? But if the church be permitted to tolerate slavery *here*, why should she not tolerate the evil named *there*? “Thou that sayest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?”

But Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon, who was both a Slaveholder and member of the Church. Would to God that all fugitive slaves could be returned under the same conditions. It is but a sorry compliment to slaveholders to bring forward this case. We will suppose a fugitive escapes, and meets some of these lovers of the “Institution” of slavery and the fugitive slave law, and they at once remonstrate with him, urge him to return, that his master is a good Philemon, and they will send by him such a letter as Paul sent by Onesimus. He is persuaded and returns bearing an epistle running somehow thus: “We beseech thee for our son Onesimus, whom we have sent again to you; thou therefore receive him, not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to us, but how much more unto thee, *both in the flesh and in the Lord*? If thou count us partners, receive him as ourselves. If he hath wronged thee or oweth aught, put that to our account; we have written it with our own hand, we will repay it. Yea, brother let us have joy of thee in the Lord; refresh our bowels in the Lord. Having confidence in thy obedience we wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than we say,” (signed by all the Doctors of Divinity of slaveholding churches north, and endorsed by the leading Hunker politicians.) Onesimus with a glad heart returns to the place of his birth and the scenes of his youth, and in the exuberance of his feelings rushes into the chamber of his former master and mistress and salutes them with, “my dear brother,” and “my dear sister.” His faith begins to stagger and his head to reel—for the clouds of wrath are heaving up on those brows, and suddenly “dog of a slave what meaneth this?” sends the blood cold to his heart. He shows his sacred talisman—the letter of brotherly love and confidence, that secures him in the treatment of the “brother in the flesh and in the Lord!” He closely scans the countenance of his *new brother* while he reads, and sees the tempest darken, and hears the mutterings, “fools,” “abolitionists,” and learns (for he cannot read) the finale of that magic epistle is forty stripes save one, on the bare back, from his loving brother, and sale to the highest bidder, on condition he be not allowed to go north! O, could our Northern apologists of slaveholders by their church epistles secure

the treatment due to a *man*, to the fugitive slave, we would bid them God speed in the work of sending them back, and the church would have many servants like the faithful Onesimus in evangelizing the world; but we weary of this hypocritical cant of appealing to this case as a justification for sending a man under the lash of the slaveholder. No man *dare* send back a fugitive with such an epistle as Paul sent to Philemon. It would make him the butt of slaveholders and the execration of the deceived slave for all after time. Let the church then become what God designed her to be—a *light* in the midst of darkness: and although she will produce commotion by letting her light *shine* upon the dark places of the world where sin revels, it is such a commotion as the Saviour himself produced, who came “not to send peace but a sword on the earth.” It is such a commotion as the Reformers produced in the heart of the Papal powers, and it is such a commotion as God himself will calm into such a peace as the world giveth not. Let her, as a faithful watchman “cry aloud and spare not”—“and show my people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins,” and then we may expect that the “mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness.” Alas! we have yet to lament, in the language of Solomon, over the poor and oppressed of our beloved land.—“So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.” And if we would avert the righteous judgments of an offended God, let us open our mouths and plead for the dumb; and let us in the faith of Promise and of Prophecy, say to the rulers of our land as Daniel to the king of the Chaldeans, “Wherefore O, king let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.” And let us “reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine,” both slaveholders and churches that hold fellowship with them, obeying the injunction, “Come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues,” and having “no company with them that they may be ashamed, yet count *them* not as an enemy but admonish *them* as a brother.” By such means the church will be the blessed instrument of bringing that gospel, with power, to the hearts of men, whose efficacy will yet be realized to be, “on earth peace good will toward men.”

FINIS.